

January

Parent Calendar

Focus: Reading Aloud to Children

What is Literacy?

Literacy is the ability to use language to read, write, listen and speak. It means being able to communicate your wants, needs, thoughts, and desires. With young children, it is important to lay the foundation for these skills, both at home and at school. Reading aloud to young children is a great way to do this! Children have the opportunity to learn many important skills when you read to them. As you are reading to your child, try the following tips:

- *Encourage your children to join in while you read. Pause to let them fill in a rhyming word or repeating line such as: "I'll huff and I'll puff. . ."*
- *Ask open-ended questions, such as "What do you think is going to happen next?" or "Why do you think he did that?"*
- *Move your finger under the words as you read aloud. This helps preschoolers connect printed words to spoken words.*

Visit your local public library and let your child choose a few children's books to check out.	Let your child pick a favorite book and read it to him tonight at bedtime.	Discuss the front and back covers of a book your child has chosen to read. Show him how to hold the book and turn the pages.	Point to the words in the story as you read it to your child.	Encourage your child to "read" a story to you.	"Echo" read a story together. You read a line and then let the child repeat the line.	Choose a word less picture book and let your child tell a story using the pictures.
Read a fairy tale to your child. Let her retell the story by acting it out.	After you've read a story to your child, talk about what happened at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story.	Read a bedtime story to your child. Point to the words with a flashlight as your read.	Let your child point to the words as you read. Use a funny pointer!	Encourage your child to point to the place in the book where you start to read.	Read a favorite story to your child. Stop in the middle and let your child create a new ending to the story.	Encourage your child to "read" a favorite story to a stuffed animal or doll.
Tell your child what an author is as you prepare to read to your child. Talk about how the author writes the words.	Give your child some blank paper and let him "write" a story.	Together, write a story about something you did today. Let your child illustrate the story.	Encourage your child to add sound effects to a favorite story as you read it aloud.	Read a story to your child. Talk about the setting of the story.	Ask a big brother, sister, cousin or friend to read a story to your child today.	Read a story and leave out some words. Ask your child to guess what you left out.
Tell your child what an illustrator does. Talk about how he draws the pictures for the story.	After reading a story to your child, have him illustrate his favorite part on a piece of paper	Give your child some blank paper and let her "write" and illustrate her own story. Encourage her to "read" it to you.	Read a story to your child and talk to your child about the characters .	Encourage your child to draw a picture of the characters in the story.	Choose a book to read tonight based on your child's interests. Your librarian can help you find books by topic.	Read an alphabet book such as Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin. Find the letters in your child's name on the pages.
Read the title of the story to your child. Ask him to tell you what he thinks the story is about.	Spell out the words in the title of the story.	Encourage your child to find certain letters in the story. It's fun to look for the letters in your child's name!	Discuss the types of punctuation in used in a book. Look for question marks and exclamation points.	Find an interesting new word in a story. See if your child can act the word out!	Find an interesting word in the story and see how many other words you can come up with that rhyme with it.	Re-read a favorite story to your child at bedtime tonight. Enjoy the closeness reading aloud brings.

February

Parent Calendar

Focus: Building Vocabulary

What is Vocabulary?

Vocabulary is the bank of words that children know and can use. Vocabulary development is the way in which children learn new words and their meanings.

Between the ages of four and six, a child's brain is ripe for learning new vocabulary. The bigger their vocabulary is....the more successful they will be in school!

The simplest way to build vocabulary is simply to talk to your child! During your daily routines, in the kitchen, when you are outside, at meal time and bath time talk about what you are doing and why. Describe things to your child, explain how things work, and simply engage your child in conversation.

Don't be afraid to use "big" words with your child. The more words a child hears, the larger his vocabulary will become!

Play "I Spy" with your child. Describe in detail an object and see if your child can guess what it is.	Play "I Spy" with your child. Let your child describe an object to you and see if you can guess what it is.	Play a thinking game with your child. See if she can name things that are hot, cold, red, pink, etc.	Play "Simon Says" with your child. Start by giving your child the directions and then switch and let him give you the commands!	Play "What am I?" with your child. Tell your child a riddle such as "I am red and I grow on a tree. What am I?" See if he can guess it!	Play "What am I?" with your child. Let him make up a riddle for you. See if you can guess what it is!	Have a tea party with your child and engage in polite conversation. Remember to say please and thank you!
Find a family photo and talk about where you were, what you were doing, etc. when the picture was taken.	Talk about feelings with your child. Ask him what makes him happy, sad, angry, surprised, anxious, nervous, etc.	Talk about love with your child. Ask her to tell you about the people she loves and encourage her to draw a picture of them.	Show your child one of his baby pictures. Together, talk about their physical changes and how they are still the same.	Talk about things that make you feel happy. Help your child think of two things they could do to make someone in your family feel happy.	Talk about your family. Identify what makes a family and who is part of your family.	Plan to eat together as a family. During dinner, encourage each member to share something about their day today.
Bake cookies with your child. Read the recipe to your child and talk about what you do first, second, third, etc.	Put kitchen items such as a spatula, tongs, wooden spoon, etc. in a bag. Let your child pull out an item and tell you what it is and how to use it.	Talk about your child's favorite food. Encourage him to describe it by color, shape, size, texture, smell, and taste.	Encourage your child to explore the pantry. Help them sort the cans by vegetables, fruits, meats, etc.	See how many food items you and your child can think of that go together: salt/pepper, peanut butter/jelly, etc.	Make some puppets with your child out of paper plates. Encourage her to put on a puppet show for your family.	Fix a healthy breakfast with your child and talk about how your body needs "fuel" to function and stay healthy.
Take a brisk walk together. Talk about the weather today.	Talk about the weather again today. Then, discuss what kind of clothing you need to wear outside today.	Look outside with your child. Encourage him to describe what he sees and then draw a picture of it.	Make a pretend television from a cardboard box. Encourage your child to be the meteorologist and give the weather report for you.	Cut pictures of different types of weather from a magazine. Ask your child to describe each one.	Talk about the four seasons. Encourage your child to discuss how each season is different.	Help your child think about ways to be safe outside. Make a list of outdoor safety rules.
During bath time tonight, have your child name her body parts and tell what each part is used for.	Gather some items of clothing (hat, tie, belt, etc.) Let your child choose an item and tell you which part of the body it goes on.	Ask your child to name all the things he can do with his mouth. (talk, sing, eat, whisper, scream, etc.)	Trace around your hand and your child's hand. Talk about which one is bigger/smaller. Trace someone else's hand and compare it, too.	Encourage your child to draw a picture of himself. Let him describe what he looks like to you.	Make a "Feely Box" by cutting a hole in the end of a shoe box. Place some items in the box and let your child tell you what they feel.	Choose an interesting picture from a magazine. Let your child tell a story about the picture

March

Parent Calendar

Focus: Letter Knowledge

What is Letter Knowledge?

Learning about letters is one of the most basic building blocks of written language. Letter knowledge includes learning letter names, letter sounds, what letters look like and how to make them. Through research, we now know that letter knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of success in first grade reading.

The most important thing to remember is that children learn letters best when they are presented in a fun, playful, and meaningful ways. Focus on using your child's name as a teaching tool for letters. It is the most meaningful word in the world to a child!

Make a name puzzle. Write your child's name on construction paper, cut it apart and put it back together again!	Buy an inexpensive set of magnetic letters from a dollar store. Let your child use them to spell his name on the refrigerator.	Let your child use play-dough to make the letters in her name.	Sing the ABC song in a variety of ways: fast, slow, loud, soft, and in a monster voice!	At bedtime, turn off the lights and "write" letters on the ceiling with a flashlight.	Put shaving cream on a cookie sheet. Let your child practice writing his name with his finger in the shaving cream.	Take a "letter walk." Point out objects such as street signs that have letters on them.
Make the first letter of your child's name on the floor with masking tape. Let your child walk the letter!	Put on funny glasses and look closely for letters around your house.	Partially fill a dishpan with sand. Hide alphabet letters in the sand and let your child look for the letters in his name.	Give your child some paper and a pencil. Encourage him to try and write his name. Accept all attempts.	Read a book to your child and look for letters in the book that are in your child's name.	Make letters from pipe cleaners. Encourage your child to make the letters in his name.	"Paint" letters on the sidewalk with water and a paintbrush.
Find objects in your house that begins with each letter of the alphabet.	Write the ABC's on a piece of paper. Take a letter walk and cross off any letter that you find.	Make an ABC book by cutting pictures out of magazines. Find one picture for each letter of the alphabet.	Choose a good alphabet book, such as Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert . Enjoy reading it together.	Write your child's name in large letters on the floor with masking tape. Let her drive a toy car around on the letters.	Sprinkle a thin layer of salt on a cookie sheet. Help your child write his name in the salt using his finger.	Write the names of everyone in your family on the sidewalk with chalk. Look to see if any begin with the same letter.
Write the first letter of your child's name on a piece of paper. Let her glue items that begin with the same sound on the letter.	Together think of words that begin with the same sound as your child's name. Make a list of these words.	Sort magnetic letters into two groups: those with straight lines and those with no straight lines.	While riding in the car, look for familiar signs (McDonald's, Burger King, etc.) and see how many your child can "read."	Use canned biscuits and help your child form them into the first letter of her name. Bake and eat letters for a snack!	Hide magnetic letters in your house. Let your child go on a letter scavenger hunt.	Tape the first letter of your child's name to his bedroom door. Talk about "his letter" at night when he goes to bed.
Create a song using a familiar tune using the letters in your child's name. Teach the song to your child.	Together look in a magazine for pictures of objects that begin with the first letter of your child's name.	Sort magnetic letters into two groups: letters in the child's name and letters not in the child's name.	Encourage your child to draw pictures of everyone in your family. Label the drawings with their names.	Make a placemat using construction paper and letters cut from a magazine.	Write the letters in your child's name on paper and tape each to the floor. Let your child hop from letter to letter as they name them.	Put sponge letters in a small dishpan of water. Let your child "fish" the letters out using a small net. Help her name the letters as she fishes them out.

April

Parent Calendar

Focus: Writing

Writing and Young Children

Writing for young children is a journey that begins with a child's first random scribble on a page. A child's desire to write comes from watching the adults in his life write. They see you writing notes, making lists, taking messages and they want to imitate that, so they begin to "write."

The way young children write gradually develops in stages. First, they scribble and make random marks on a page. Then, the child begins to draw pictures and gradually moves to making "mock" letters. They will string letters together to resemble words. Next, they begin to make conventional letters and may attempt to label a picture with letters. Finally, they make attempts at spelling by sounding words out and eventually they end up with conventionally spelled words.

The important thing for parents to remember as a child experiments with writing is to accept all attempts your child makes at writing rather than trying to teach correct formation of letters. Give your child plenty of playful, meaningful experiences with writing!

Make a writing box with your child. Fill a shoe box with pencils, markers, chalk, and a variety of papers. Keep it out for your child to use.	Write your child's name on a card. Keep the card handy and let the child look at it anytime he wants to write his name.	Encourage your child to write his name on pictures he has drawn.	Together, write a letter to a friend. Talk about the words as you write them. Be sure to let your child sign the letter!	Find an interesting picture and encourage your child to tell you a story about the picture. Write down the story for your child.	Save your junk mail envelopes. Give them to your child and let them write letters to go in the envelopes.	Collect the pictures your child draws. Put them together in a book. Together label each picture with words.
Give your child a spiral notebook to use as a journal. Encourage her to write important things in her journal.	Take a fun trip to the zoo. When you come home, encourage your child to write about the zoo in her journal.	Read a favorite book to your child. When you are finished, encourage your child to draw his favorite part of the story.	Write down how to make a PB&J sandwich and let your child draw pictures to go with it. Read the instructions together and make a sandwich.	Hang a family message board in the kitchen. Write a daily message to your child and then help her read it. Let her write a message, too!	Provide sidewalk chalk and encourage children to write on the sidewalk.	"Air Write" with your child. Show her how to make big letters in the air using your finger.
Cover a small table with butcher paper. Let your child scribble on the paper while you cook dinner.	Make a shopping list with your child. Give her paper and a pencil to make a list while you make yours.	Give your child a clipboard & pencil. Encourage him to look for words to write down in the kitchen.	Let your child draw a meal on a paper plate. Together, write the names of the food he drew.	Play "Restaurant" together. Let your child pretend to be a waiter and take your order. Provide a small notepad and pencil for him to write your order down.	Write to music. Select some upbeat music and encourage your child to scribble or draw to the tempo of the music.	Fold paper in half to make a card. Let your child create a birthday card for a friend.
Make a gel writing bag. Put ¼ C. of hair gel in a small Ziploc bag. Let your child write letters on the outside of the bag using his finger.	Put shaving cream on a cookie sheet and let your child write and draw in it.	Attach a large piece of paper to the wall. Let children paint with a large paintbrush.	Write in the dirt with a stick.	Set up a pretend office for your child. Provide pens, papers, notepads, for the child to work with.	Encourage your child to draw a picture of himself and write his name on the picture.	Together, write a story about your child's favorite stuffed animal. Let your child illustrate the story.
Make a travel writing bag. Encourage your child to write while waiting in the doctor's office, in the car, etc.	Together, label the drawers in your child's room. Put a picture along with the word. Good for reading, writing, and organizing!	Make a family scrapbook of pictures. Help your child label the pictures with names.	Write on black construction paper with a Q-tip and lemon juice. Place the paper in the sunlight and watch what happens!	Let your child choose a fun pen or pencil from the dollar store to add to your writing box. Encourage your child to write their name!	Help your child write his name using cookie dough or biscuit dough. Bake the letters and enjoy a name snack together!	Have your child draw a picture of your house. Help him write his address on the house.

May

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Phonological Awareness

What is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological Awareness is simply the sounds that we hear in our language. It is important that young children have many opportunities to play with the sounds and words in language.

Listening and rhyming are two important phonological awareness skills. Other skills include hearing the beginning sounds of words, hearing words in a sentence, and being able to tell that words have "parts" or syllables.

Phonological Awareness is not the same as phonics...or, sounding out words. When young children are engaged in phonological awareness activities, there are no written letters or words. They simply are listening and playing with the sounds in words!

It is important for children to have many experiences playing with the sounds of language. The more they do this, the better readers they will become!

Take a "Listening Walk" with your child. Stop and listen to the sounds around you. Talk about what you hear.	Give your child 2-3 simple steps to follow, such as stand up, turn around, and then pick up your shoes. Can she remember the instructions and follow them?	Play a listening game together. Make animal sounds and let your child guess which animal makes that sound.	Hide a ticking clock or timer in the living room. Encourage your child to listen to where the sound is coming from and find the timer.	Make a tape recording of the voices of people in your family. Play the recording for your child and see if he can identify who it is by listening.	Put different items in empty film canisters and seal the lids. See if your child can tell what is in the canister by shaking it and listening to the sound.	Play a listening game. Clap a pattern and see if your child can listen and then clap the same pattern.
Teach your child a nursery rhyme, such as "Jack and Jill." Talk about the words that rhyme.	Read a rhyming book such as <u>Down By the Bay</u> by Raffi to your child. Let him try to guess what words will rhyme as you read.	Together, see how many silly words you can make up to rhyme with your child's name.	Name a word for your child, such as "cat." See if he can tell you a word that rhymes.	Say two words (hat-frog or hat/cat) and see if your child can tell you if they rhyme or not.	Play "Rhyme Toss" with your child. Toss a small ball back and forth while saying rhyming words.	Sing a favorite song together. Listen for the words that rhyme.
Clap the syllables in your child's name. For example: clap two times for the name "Jo-Ann."	Point to items in your home (lamp, carpet, etc.) and clap the syllables in each word.	Clap the syllables in the names of your child's friends. Help your child decide which name has the most syllables.	Together, think of as many words as you can that only have one syllable. Make a list of these words.	Let your child cut out pictures of objects from a magazine. Sort them by the number of syllables in each object's name.	Clap the number of syllables in the color words: red, yellow, purple, orange, black, green, blue, etc.	Together, think of any many words as you can that have two syllables.
Read a story to your child. Count the number of words in the title of the story.	Read a story to your child and point to each word as you read.	Choose a favorite line from a nursery rhyme. Have your child hop one time for each word in the line.	Gather some small blocks or other toy. Together, think of a silly sentence. Count the words in the sentence using the blocks.	Give your child a cup and some pennies. Say a sentence and encourage your child to drop one penny in the cup for each word.	Read a story to your child. Let her point to the words as you read. Show her that there are spaces between words.	Make a silly sentence macaroni necklace by stringing one piece of macaroni on a piece of yarn for each word in the sentence.
Teach your child a tongue twister like Peter Piper. Talk about the words that begin with the same sound.	Together, cut out pictures from a magazine that begin with the same sound as your child's name.	Say two words that begin with the same sound like "tie/toy." Ask your child if they begin the same. Try it with words that are not the same like: "tie/cup."	Together, think of a descriptive word that begins with the same sound as your child's name. For example: "Happy Hailey." Let her draw a picture to illustrate this.	Read a story like "Some Smug Slug" by Pamela Duncan Edwards. Listen for all the words that begin with the /s/ sound.	See how many words you can come up with together that begin with the same sound as your child's name.	Cut out pictures from a magazine that all begin with the "T" sound.

June

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Literacy and Summer Fun

Literacy and Summer Fun!

You can incorporate literacy activities into everything you do with your child. As the days get longer during the summer, make an effort to provide fun and educational activities for your child!

There are many summer-fun learning activities that cost absolutely nothing! Here are some tips to make summer fun together:

- *Visit your public library. Most libraries offer free summer programs for children, including a story time hour.*
- *Visit your local bookstore. Most have a children's section where you can sit comfortably and look at the books with your child. Many offer a discount section where you can purchase great books very cheaply.*
- *Take a trip to your local zoo or park. When you get back home, write and draw about what you did at the park.*

Turn the TV off and get outside. Have some summer fun together!

Visit your local library and get a library card. Find out when story time is offered and plan to go!	Make a summer fun reading bag. Put books and writing materials in a bag and take it with you everywhere you go!	Keep a reading log. Help your child write the title of every book you read this summer.	Establish a time each day for reading. Turn the television off and read together as a family.	Encourage your child to make a book for someone special. Let him illustrate it and help him write the words to the book.	Make a "Reading Fort" with your child. Drape a sheet over a table or some chairs. Crawl into the fort and read Jack & Jill's Treehouse by Pamela Duncan Edwards.	Let your child dress up in some old clothes, hats, scarves, jewelry. Act out a favorite story together.
Trade books with a friend. Keep sharing and reading books together throughout the summer.	Together, plan a backyard camping trip with your child. Make a list of the supplies you will need. Check them off as you gather them up.	Give your child a cereal box and encourage her to look for the letters in her name on the box.	When riding in the car, ask your child to look for road signs shaped like circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles.	Let your child help you make a fruit salad. Write down the recipe together. Talk about the different fruits you used.	Go outside and lie on the ground. Look at the clouds and talk about the shapes. Read It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw.	Sing a silly song together. Change the beginning sounds of each word in "Happy Birthday" to /s/. Sing "Sappy Sirthday so sou!"
Encourage your child to write his name in the sand or the dirt at the park.	Make an ABC hopscotch board on the sidewalk with chalk. Encourage your child to name the letters as he plays hopscotch.	Put a cookie sheet and a set of magnetic letters in the car. Let your child spell the words she sees while you are out.	Read a story together and then make character puppets out of paper sacks. Encourage your child to put on a puppet show for your family!	Leave a secret message for your child to find. Help him read the message. Encourage him to write a secret message to someone else!	Take a walk together and listen for the sounds of summer. Write down everything you heard when you get back home.	Attend a free summer concert at the park. Read Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin by Lloyd Moss.
Read Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown. Lay outside tonight and explore the moon together.	Provide strips of paper and crayons/markers. Let your child make bookmarks for your entire family.	Have your own story time at the park. Invite some friends and ask each one to ring their favorite story. Read together under a tree.	Take a nature walk together. Give your child a paper sack to collect interesting objects. Write down what you found in your journal.	Make plans for a family meal. Encourage everyone to talk about their favorite summertime activity.	Make a list of all the different kinds of ice cream. For a treat, take a trip to the ice cream shop and get your favorite flavor!	Talk to your child about how summer differs from the other seasons. Make a list of fun activities that you can only do in the summer!
Visit an art museum or art supply store. Then, read The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds. Encourage your child to create his own masterpiece.	Fill a small dishpan with sand. Bury some plastic letters in the sand. See if your child can uncover the letters in his name.	Take a magnifying glass outside and look closely at different types of flowers. Go back in and encourage your child to draw a picture of his favorite flower.	Fill up a small tub or pool with water. Provide a variety of objects like cups, boats, spoons, etc. Let your child see which toys sink and which float.	Create an obstacle course in the backyard. Time each other as you run the course and see who can do it the fastest!	Cut shapes from paper. Hide them in your house. Play "Shape Hide & Seek." Give your child a shape to hunt for and see how many she can find!	Have a picnic at the park or in your own backyard. Read One Hundred Hungry Ants by Elinor Pinczes.

July

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Health & Safety

Health and Safety are important things to consider when you have a young child in your home.

Appropriate health concepts to teach young children include introducing them to the importance of eating healthy, getting plenty of rest and exercise, brushing their teeth, washing their hands, dressing appropriately for the weather, and covering coughs and sneezes.

Safety concepts become a little harder for parents. We certainly want our young children to be safe, but in the course of teaching safety we must also be careful not to frighten our children. Teaching appropriate safety concepts such as how and when to dial 9-1-1 and what to do if a stranger is around can be done playfully and meaningfully without scaring our children.

Children need lots of repetition when learning new skills and the learning should be fun. Try role-playing what to do in case of an emergency. Use songs and chants to teach the important information your child should know!

Talk about healthy foods. Read The Very Hungry Caterpillar and talk about why he gets a tummy ache!	Look at a food pyramid and talk about the 5 food groups. Together, make a list of foods your child enjoys from each food group.	Plan a healthy snack. Write down the ingredients you'll need and shop with your child to get those. Make and enjoy the snack together.	Fix a healthy breakfast for your child and talk about how his body needs "fuel" to function.	Read Gregory, the Terrible Eater by Mitchell Sharmat. Let your child cut out pictures from a magazine that Gregory would like to eat.	Talk about how your body needs water to stay healthy. Keep a bottle of water available for your child throughout the day and encourage her to drink plenty.	Cut out pictures of various foods from a magazine. Help your child sort them into "healthy" foods and "junk" foods.
Talk about the importance of exercising to stay healthy.	Go outside and help your child warm up his muscles. Stretch, flex, and practice balancing!	Start a family exercise plan. Set aside 20 minutes each evening to walk or bike together as a family.	Put on some lively dance music and dance together with your child.	Take a trip to the park. Encourage your child to climb and slide on the equipment there. Great for building muscles!	Create an obstacle course outside. Run, jump, skip, gallop and trot over the course together.	Read Monkey See Monkey Do by Anita Holsonback. Then, go outside and act out the animal exercises together!
Teach your child to wash her hands before eating & after using the restroom. Wash for at least 20 seconds—just long enough to sing Row, Row, Row Your Boat twice!	Make bath time part of your nightly routine. Add water-proof books, tub crayons and some sponges for bath fun! Teach your child the Rub-a-Dub-Dub nursery rhyme!	Buy a new toothbrush for your child. Teach them to brush after eating and before bed. Set a time for 1 minute to make sure they brush long enough!	Purchase a cheap comb and brush for your child. Teach her how to brush her own hair. Read Aaron's Hair by Robert Munsch.	Make a daily routine chart with your child. Let him mark off each day that he brushes teeth, bathes, and combs his own hair.	Encourage your child to dress himself. Allow a little extra time and provide your child a choice of two items to pick from.	Make reading part of your nightly routine. Read a favorite story before bed each night. Try How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight by Jane Yolen & Mark Teague.
Use a familiar tune and make up a song to teach your child his phone number. Review it frequently with him	Teach your child what an emergency is. Role-play what she should do in case of an emergency.	Using a play phone, teach your child how to dial 9-1-1 in case of an emergency. Encourage your child to write the number down.	Talk to your child about "stranger danger." Read The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers by Jan & Stan Berenstain.	Talk to your child about how to play safely in the water. Never leave your child unattended near water.	Use a familiar tune and make up a song to teach your child his address. Review it frequently with him.	Go for a car ride today. Talk about the need to buckle up for safety. Always do a "buckle check" before leaving in the car.
Talk to your child about community helpers like police officers and fire fighters. Schedule a visit to the fire station. When you get home, encourage your child to write about your visit in his journal.	Teach your child the danger of playing with matches. Make sure she knows to never touch matches.	Teach your child to "Stop, Drop, and Roll" if their clothes should catch on fire. Role-play this together.	With your child, check your home for smoke alarms. Count how many you have and tell your child what to do if it should ever go off. If you don't have any, make plans to get some.	Play outside today with your child. Apply sunscreen and talk about protecting your skin from the sun. Read What the Sun Sees by Nancy Tafuri	Take a walk with your child. Talk about how to safely cross the street. Teach the rule: "stop, look, and listen before you cross the street." Encourage your child to illustrate this rule.	Teach your child not to play with or bother strange dogs.

August

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Social-Emotional Development

What is Social Emotional Development?

Social-Emotional development involves a number of important concepts – including having a good self-concept, being able to understand and manage feelings; knowing appropriate social behaviors, friendship skills, and manners; and being able to cooperate and manage conflicts and resolve problems. These skills all play a large part in a child's success at school.

Most young children develop these social-emotional skills through their relationships with other people. Obviously, parents and families play a large role in shaping a child's social and emotional development because most social emotional development occurs without formal instruction. The more support a child receives from his family, the better prepared he will be for school.

As a parent, you can provide meaningful, fun, authentic, and engaging ways to promote your child's social-emotional development. Always remember to be a good role-model for your young child. Be polite, share, and model problem-solving strategies for them each and every day!

<p>Read The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper. Talk to your child about trying new activities even when they are a little difficult!</p>	<p>Praise your child for a job well done! Give specific praise such as "Way to go! You tried to tie your own shoes today!"</p>	<p>Encourage your child to draw a picture of himself. Talk about what makes him unique and special in your family.</p>	<p>Give your child some paper and an ink pad. Let her stamp her thumbprints on the paper. Talk about how everyone is different.</p>	<p>At dinner tonight, ask everyone to tell what they especially like about each child in the family.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to draw a picture of his family. Take a photograph of the child with his picture and hang it in the kitchen.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to look in the mirror. Talk about how she is alike and different from other children.</p>
<p>With your child, make a list of words that describe feelings. Take photos of your child making "feeling faces" and create your own "Feelings" book.</p>	<p>Read the book How are You Peeling? By Saxton Freyman. Discuss the emotions in the book.</p>	<p>Sing "If You're Happy & You Know It" together. Change the words to other feeling words such as "mad", surprised, etc.</p>	<p>Read What Are You So Grumpy About? By Tom Lichtenheld. Tell your child it's okay to feel grumpy. Help her know what to do to make herself feel better.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to cut out pictures of people's faces from a magazine. Talk about how your child thinks they are feeling. Sort them into groups: happy, sad, excited, etc.</p>	<p>Make a feelings bean bag toss game. Use the pictures from yesterday to make a board. Let your child toss a bean bag onto the board and then act out the emotion he lands on.</p>	<p>Let your child make feeling face puppets from paper plates and popsicle sticks. Encourage him to create a feelings puppet show.</p>
<p>Discuss what cooperation means (working together). With your child, make a list of ways your family cooperates together.</p>	<p>Paint a picture together. Provide paints and paper and work cooperatively to paint a picture. Hang it up in your child's bedroom.</p>	<p>Make a pizza together tonight for dinner. Read The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza by Philomen Sturges. Talk about who helped!</p>	<p>Play a game together that requires taking turns. Talk about "your turn" and "my turn" with your child.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to cut out pictures from magazines that show people working together.</p>	<p>Invite a friend over to play with your child. Provide a board game for them to play to encourage turn-taking and cooperation.</p>	<p>Let your child work with you to set the table.</p>
<p>Encourage your child to say "please" and "thank-you." Be a good role model and show her what it sounds like!</p>	<p>Talk to your child about sharing and what that means. Read How Do Dinosaurs Play with Their Friends by Jane Yolen.</p>	<p>Make a list with your child of ways to share.</p>	<p>Make cookies together and share them with a neighbor.</p>	<p>Help your child learn to problem-solve by playing "What Should You Do?" Talk to your child about a situation such as "Your friend won't let go of a toy. What should you do?"</p>	<p>Trace around your child's hand. Together, think of ways to use helping hands. Write one idea on the hand you traced. Hang it up in your child's bedroom.</p>	<p>Share books with a friend. Invite a friend to share favorite books together. Trade books for a week.</p>
<p>Read Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems. Let your child act out the story.</p>	<p>Discuss appropriate ways to handle anger rather than throwing a temper tantrum.</p>	<p>Teach your child the "turtle" technique for calming down when angry. Stop, go into your "shell", take 3 deep breaths and think of something to do instead of tantruming.</p>	<p>Read The Chocolate-Covered-Cookie Tantrum by Deborah Blumenthal. Talk about why Sophie doesn't get what she wants!</p>	<p>Teach your child words to appropriately express anger.</p>	<p>Together, think of something that makes your child angry. With puppets, act out ways to appropriately handle that anger.</p>	<p>Read Andrew's Angry Words by Dorothea Lachner. Talk with your child about how angry words hurt.</p>

September

Math! People either love or hate it, but one thing's for sure: math is all around us every day!

In our daily routines, we are always sorting, counting, measuring, adding, subtracting, and solving problems. Just think about how many times each day you do one of these activities without even noticing that you are performing a math operation!

It is important to expose your child to math concepts while he is young. Count forks when you set the table, let your child sort socks on laundry day, look for patterns in fabric—math is easy to incorporate throughout the day!

By providing many playful opportunities for young children to explore math concepts, you will be preparing your child for the more complex skills they will learn later.

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Math and Young Children

Count pennies with your child. Touch each penny as you count it.	Have an orange for a snack. Encourage your child to guess how many seeds there will be in the orange. Then, count them!	Instead of counting sheep to fall asleep, count your child's favorite animal. Count dozing dogs or drowsy dinosaurs!	While in the car, count the number of signs you pass on your street.	Set the table tonight with your child. Count the number of forks, spoons, plates, napkins, etc.	Let your child count the number of cans in the pantry. Practice adding "one more" or "taking away one" and see how many there are.	Together, count your child's favorite toys (cars, dolls, legos, etc.)
Let your child help you sort the laundry today. After you've sorted, help your child measure the detergent and add it to the washing machine.	Sort crayons, markers, and pencils into containers.	Let your child cut out coupons. Sort them by color or product. Count each group and see which has more.	Sort M & M's by color. Decide which is your favorite and then count them as you eat them!	Start a collection of buttons. Sort them first by color, then by size, shape, or number of holes. Read The Button Box by Margarette S. Reid	Give your child a variety of dry pasta shapes and a muffin tin. Let her sort the pasta shapes into the tin. Read Strega Nona by Tomie De Paola.	Cut out pictures of animals from a magazine. Let your child sort them: zoo animals, farm animals, pets, etc.
Share a tortilla snack. Cut the tortilla into triangles and count the sides of the triangle.	Give your child some play-do and let her cut shapes out of it with cookie cutters.	Go on a "shape hunt" in your house. Help your child look for shapes around the house (rectangle doors, circle clocks, etc.)	Read Go Away Big Green Monster by Ed Emberly. Give your child construction paper shapes to create a monster picture with!	See if your child can make one large square from several square crackers. Try it with rectangle crackers, too!	Make a shape concentration game. Draw pairs of shapes on index cards. Turn them over and play concentration together.	Talk a walk around your neighborhood. Look at the shapes of street signs.
Clap a pattern. See if your child can clap the same pattern. Let him clap a pattern for you to copy!	Help your child look for patterns in her clothing today. Look for repeating stripes, color patterns, etc.	Make a pattern necklace. String macaroni onto yarn in a repeating pattern.	Go outside and do exercise patterns. Hop once, bend, stretch, and hop again. Repeat. Let your child think of an exercise pattern.	Make a pattern with coins. Penny, nickel, penny, nickel, etc. Gradually add another coin to make it more difficult!	Together, create a pattern using cans from your pantry. Try this one: Tall can, tall can, short can; tall can, tall can; short can.	Provide your child with paints or markers and a large sheet of paper. Let her create patterned paper for wrapping a gift.
Give your child measuring cups, empty containers, and a small tub of water. Let her practice filling, pouring, and measuring into other containers	Get a tape measure and measure each other. Who is taller? Also, try measuring arms, legs, feet, etc.	Cut a piece of yarn or rope about 6" long. Let your child measure objects in your house with it such as the couch, table, rug, etc.	Help your child put measuring cups in order from the biggest to the smallest.	Measure everyone in your family and stand in order from tallest to shortest.	Measure how many steps it takes your child to go from the kitchen to the bedroom. How many steps does it take you?	Give you child a small ruler and let him measure his stuffed animals with it.

October

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Science and Young Children

Science and Young Children

Young children are natural scientists and families play a tremendous role in fostering their scientific discoveries! The more encouragement a child receives from his family the more interest they develop in science!

Science, like math, occurs naturally all around us. Children engage in science when they observe nature, compare objects, put objects in motion, predict what will happen next and experiment with things in the world.

As a parent, you can foster scientific development by doing the following things:

- *Encourage discovery and provide opportunities for your child to explore the natural world*
- *Allow your children to problem-solve*
- *Encourage your child to ask questions and look for answers through exploration and discovery*
- *Allow your child to experience fun, hands-on, science activities and enjoy those with your child!*

Collect a variety of leaves. Tape a leaf to a piece of paper and let your child paint over & around it. Talk about how the leaves are alike & different.	Do a bark rubbing. Place a piece of paper over the bark of a tree. Rub a crayon across the paper to make a rubbing.	Take a nature walk. Collect a variety of rocks. When you return home, encourage your child to sort and count them.	Pull up a weed. Examine it closely with your child. Look at the roots, stem, leaves, etc.	Make a bird feeder by smearing peanut butter on a pine cone. Roll it in bird seed and hang in a tree. Observe what types of birds come to feed.	Take some small blocks or legos outside. Measure plants by stacking the blocks up. Compare which plants are the same height, which are taller, etc.	Go for a walk. Take a trash bag with you and pick up any trash you see lying around. Talk to your child about recycling.
Have your child sort their crayons by color. Lay all of the red crayons end to end; then all of the black crayons. Compare the two lines and see which is longer.	Look through your rock collection. Let your child choose a big rock and a little rock. Give him a piece of paper and let him draw the big rock on one side & the little one on the other.	Give your child a magnet. Go through the house together and experiment to see which objects a magnet attracts and which ones it doesn't attract.	Collect a variety of objects (cotton ball, leave, feather, rock, magnet, etc.). Give your child a straw and see which objects can be moved by blowing through the straw.	Make a popcorn snack. Compare what the popcorn looks like before it's popped and after it's popped.	Pour a small amount of sugar in one dish and salt in the other. Compare with your child how they are alike. Taste each and see how they are different.	Place a piece of ice outside in the sun. Watch what happens. Compare what it looked like before you took it outside and what it looked like after it was in the sun.
Build a ramp and then gather several of your child's favorite toys. Experiment to see which ones will roll down the ramp and which won't.	Put dominoes in motion. Line them up with a little space in between each. Gently push the first domino and see what happens.	Place a small sailboat in a tub of water. Encourage your child to move the boat across the water without touching it!	Place a beach ball on the floor. See how many different ways your child can think of to move it across the floor without touching it!	See how far your child can jump. Place a piece of tape on the floor and encourage him to jump as far as he can. Measure and see!	Get a paper box and fill it with objects and then see if your child can move it by pushing it. Which things are easy to move & which aren't?	Place a marble in a small amount of paint and a piece of paper in the bottom of a shoe box. Drop the marble in the box and let your child roll it around to make a marble painting!
Go outside and make shadows together. Experiment to see which time of day your child's shadow is the longest.	Fill a small tub with water. Let your child choose some toys and experiment with them to see if they will sink or float.	Soak a hard-boiled egg in vinegar for several days. Drop it and see what happens!	Experiment to see which things absorb liquid and which don't. Drop water on a variety of objects (paper, paper towel, Styrofoam, etc.) Which absorb?	Sprinkle a little water on a piece of bread and seal it in a baggie. Watch it over the next several days and see what happens to it!	Place a lima bean in a baggie with a wet paper towel. Seal it and hang it up in a window. Watch what happens!	Place a piece of colored construction paper in the window sill. Watch how it changes as the sun fades it.
Cut the stem of a white carnation. Place it in a cup of colored water. Ask your child to predict what will happen. Watch over the next few days and see!	Gather several types of balls. Ask your child to predict which one is the bounciest. Drop the balls from the same height and see how many times each one bounces.	Ask your child to predict what will happen when you mix two colors. Put yellow food coloring in a cup of water. Add a drop or two of blue and see if you are right!	Together, build a ramp. Gather some toy cars together and predict which one will go the farthest. Experiment by rolling each car down the ramp. Mark where they stop with tape.	Ask your child to predict what will happen if a plant doesn't get enough water & sun. Place a small plant in a closet and watch what happens over the next few days.	Predict how many times your heart beats in 10 seconds. Show your child how to find her pulse and let her count the number of beats while you time it.	Ask your child to predict what will happen to a hard-boiled egg if you soak it in coke. Place the egg in a class of coke and after several days, remove it. See if you were right.

November

TEEM Parent Calendar Focus: Social Studies and Young Children

Social Studies and Young Children

Social Studies may seem like a subject that should be presented to older children. But, social studies is really just learning about families, cultures, and communities. Even our youngest children can be exposed to the world around them and learn many things from it.

As young children explore themselves, their families, neighborhoods, their community and even cultures and people from around the world, they are learning about social studies.

As with other important components of early childhood education, social studies concepts should be presented to young children through meaningful and playful activities. Enjoy these fun activities together as you teach your child about social studies!

Let your child lay down on a large piece of butcher paper. Trace around his body and let him color in his facial features, clothes, etc.	Make hand prints and foot prints with your child. Let her dip her hands and feet in paint and then press them onto paper.	Make a "Me Flag." Cut a pennant-shaped piece of paper. Let your child draw or cut out pictures of things he likes and glue them to the pennant.	Share with your child the meaning or origin of her name. Encourage your child to write his name and draw a picture of himself.	Read <u>I Like Me</u> by Nancy Carlson. Talk about what makes your child special.	Measure and weigh your child. Help them write down how much they weigh and how tall they are. Do this each month and see how they grow!	Take a picture of your child. Show her a baby picture and then look at the current picture. Compare and talk about how she is growing and changing.
Talk about your family with your child. Show her some pictures of grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.	Talk about family traditions with your child. Encourage your child to draw a picture of his favorite family tradition.	Together, draw a family tree. Compare your family tree to a friends'. How are your families alike and yet different?	Talk about where other members of your family live. Find their city and state on the globe or map.	Make a family book. Encourage your child to draw a picture of her member of her family. Draw something each person likes to do.	Read <u>The Relatives Came</u> by Cynthia Rylant. Talk to your child about who his relatives are.	Take a picture of everyone in the family. With your child, compare how you each look alike and what is different about each of you.
Show your child a globe or a world map. Locate your city and state on the map.	Take a walk together and look at the stores, houses, buildings in your neighborhood. Help your child draw a map of your neighborhood.	While you are driving in the car, help your child look for license plates from other states. Find those states on the globe or map.	When driving to a familiar location, see if your child can tell you where to turn next.	Encourage your child to build your neighborhood with blocks. A variety of boxes can make good building blocks, too!	Take pictures of buildings in your neighborhood. Make a neighborhood picture book.	Read <u>Machines at Work</u> by Byron Barton. Look for machines in your neighborhood. Encourage your child to draw a picture of one of the machines.
Visit an ethnic grocery store. Look at the different types of foods available.	Listen to music from another culture.	Read <u>Bread, Bread, Bread</u> by Ann Morris. Explore the different types of bread eaten throughout the world.	Try one of the types of bread you read about yesterday for a snack today!	Read <u>Margaret & Margarita</u> by Lynn Reiser. Talk about how different people speak different languages.	Learn to say "hello" in another language.	Learn to count to 10 in another language.
Take a trip around your city. Find the police station, fire station, news station, doctor's office, etc. Talk about each of these community workers & their jobs.	Talk to your child about what he would like to be when he grows up. Help him think about the work he would do.	Make arrangements to visit the news station. Talk with the news reporter and the meteorologist about their jobs.	Create a TV by cutting an opening in a large box. Let your child pretend to be the news reporter or meteorologist.	Let your child cut out pictures of community helpers from magazines. Make a community helpers book.	Find pictures of community helpers and the tools they use (firefighter/ hose; doctor/ stethoscope, etc.) Let your child match the worker to the tool he needs for his job.	Let your child write a letter to a relative. Take it to the post office and let your child mail the letter.

December

TEEM Parent Calendar

Focus: Literacy and Music

It's been said that "good things come in threes." That certainly is true with: literacy, music and young children. These three make a wonderful and fun combination!

Music is an avenue for young children to learn many literacy skills. Think about how many fun and exciting words are heard in children's music. What a wonderful way to build vocabulary!

Rhythm and rhyme occur frequently both in language and music. When a child understands the rhythm and rhyme of the language, the more successful she will be at reading. Phonological awareness skills, such as learning to listen, separate words into syllables, and sentences into words, can be taught quite naturally through music. These skills impact reading success as well.

Take some time this month and enjoy the powerful combination of literacy, music and your child!

Let your child make a drum from an oatmeal box. Cover the box with construction paper & let your child decorate it.	Encourage your child to use his drum to beat out his name. For example: Jacob would have two beats. Try beating out other words!	Share with your child how some tribal cultures use drums to signal special events or feelings. Let your child create a signal to call the family to dinner.	Give your child a sound pattern to beat out on the drum. You beat the pattern first and see if he can copy the rhythm. Let him create a rhythm for you to copy, too.	Put some good band music on and teach your child to march to the beat of the music. Listen for the beat of the drums!	Get a couple of bouncing balls. Turn on your child's favorite song and bong the balls to the beat of the music.	Make music with various items you find around the house. Try pots, pans, spoons, cans, rubber bands, etc.
Make a shaker by putting beans in a water bottle and sealing it. Try adding a variety of items to other bottles for a variety of different sounds.	Teach your child the <i>Itsy, Bitsy Spider</i> . Sing it together, changing the way you sign it each time. Try it in a high voice, a low voice, and a loud and soft voice!	Use a familiar tune, (such as <i>Row, Row, Row your Boat</i>) and make up a song with your child about picking up toys, setting the table, taking a bath etc.	Sing <i>If You're Happy & You Know It</i> together. Think of all the feeling words (angry, surprised, nervous, etc.) and add those to the song.	Learn a new song and sing it with your child. Ask your child's teacher for the words to songs she sings at school!	Find a piece of sheet music and look at it with your child. Show him how music is written in notes and words are written with letters.	After a bedtime story, help your child make up a song using a familiar tune to retell the story.
Make a jingle bell bracelet. Help your child string jingle bells on a shoe string. Tie the ends together to make a bracelet.	Make a tape-recording of your child singing a favorite song. Let him listen to it at bedtime.	Fill several bottles with varying amounts of water. Show your child how to make sound by blowing across the top of the bottle. Compare the sounds you hear.	Hum a favorite song that your child is familiar with. See if he can guess the song you are humming.	Do the <i>Hokey Pokey</i> together. This is great for teaching your child to listen and follow directions.	Ask your child to close his eyes. Play the drum, shakers, or jingle bells. See if he can guess which instrument you are playing.	Choose some interesting instrumental music to listen to. Keep time with the music by clapping your hands.
Make cymbals out of old tin foil pie plates. Attach a string for a handle. Play the cymbals in time to some favorite music.	Take a trip to the library and find a book about musical instruments. Look at it together and tell your child the names of each instrument.	Let your child cut out pictures of musical instruments from a magazine. Write the names of the instruments and make a musical instrument book.	See if you can think of funny words that rhyme with the names of the musical instruments.	Sing one of your child's favorite songs together. Listen for rhyming words. Think of other words that rhyme.	Use the cymbals you made to beat the names of the musical instruments. For example, beat the cymbals 2 times for gui-tar, 3 times for vi-o-lin.	Invite some friends over and play "Musical Hugs." Let the children walk around in a circle until the music stops. When it stops, hug someone nearby!
Make a microphone out of a toilet paper roll and a small Styrofoam ball. Let your child sing his favorite song into the "microphone!"	Provide scarves or streamers for your child to use creatively as they move and dance to their favorite music.	Put on some music and give your child some paper and paints or markers. Encourage him to color to the tempo of the music.	Invite a family member or friend who plays an instrument over to perform a concert for you.	Play "musical statues" with your child. Put on some music and dance to the beat. When the music stops, freeze like a statue!	Drop a few jingle bells into some paint. Place them in a coffee can lined with paper. Seal it up and make music and art at the same time!	Use the rhythm instruments you've made this month and have a family band night. Give everyone an instrument to play!